

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, UNESCO, VT

SUBJECT: FURTHER VATICAN VIEWS ON UNESCO

REF: ROME 5751; STATE 080985

FROM AMBASSADOR LODGE'S OFFICE

ARCHBISHOP GIOVANNI BENELLI, VATICAN SUBSTITUTE SECRETARY OF STATE, HAS ASKED THAT WE CONVEY TO THE DEPARTMENT THE FOLLOWING THREE POINTS AS A FOLLOW-UP TO OUR DEMARCHE OF APRIL 17(SEE REFTELS).

1. THE VATICAN WHOLEHEARTEDLY AGREES THAT UNESCO MUST NOT BE PERMITTED TO BECOME POLITICIZED; IT IS TOO VALUABLE AN ORGANIZATION AND IT MUST MAINTAIN ITS SCIENTIFIC, EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY RATHER THAN BECOME ENMESHED IN POLITICS.

2. THE VATICAN DEPLORES UNESCO'S ACTION IN SUSPENDING FUNDING OF PROJECTS IN ISRAEL, BUT WISHES TO POINT OUT THAT ISRAEL WAS NOT WITHOUT FAULT BECAUSE IT HAD DISOBEYED CONSISTENTLY UNESCO PLEAS TO DISCONTINUE EXCAVATIONS IN RELIGIOUS SITES; POINTING OUT THAT SUCH ISRAELI ACTIONS (WHICH ARE CONTINUING) VIOLATE THE PLURALISTIC NATURE OF JERUSALEM, A CITY IN WHICH THE THREE MAJOR RELIGIOUS GROUPS (CHRISTIANS, MOSLEMS, AND JEWS) MUST CONTINUE TO COEXIST.

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3. THE VATICAN HOPES THE US WILL EMPLOY ITS INFLUENCE TO

MODERATE ISRAELI ACTIVITIES IN JERUSALEM AND HOPES THAT THE US
WILL FIND A WAY TO CONTINUE ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNESCO BECAUSE
IF IT DOES NOT DO SO UNESCO WILL DISAPPEAR AND ITS DISAPPEARANCE
WILL BE A DEPLORABLE EVENT.VOLPE

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